



Minutes of the Coventry City Supporters Forum Meeting
Thursday 24th July, 2025, Coventry City Boardroom, Coventry Building Society Arena

1. In Attendance:

Supporters:

Colin Henderson (CH) – Chair
Pete Griffiths (PG) – Vice Chair, Sky Blues Talk
Billy Bell (BB) - Former Players Association
Alan Ludford (AL) - Diamond Club
Simone Seth (SS) - Disabled Supporters Association
Lewis Wale (LW) - Proud Sky Blues
Jack Saunders (JS) – Leamington and Warwick Supporters Club
Paul Armstrong (PA) - Coundon Supporters Club
Paul Maddix (PM) – Welsh Supporters Club
Steve Harding (SH) – Bedworth & Nuneaton Supporters Club

Coventry City Football Club:

Doug King – Owner, Executive Chairman
Nicola Ibbetson – Chief Business Officer
Paul Tyrrell – Chief Operations Officer
Mark Hornby – Head of Marketing & Communications
Rasoul Didarzadeh – Head of Retail
Leigh Thomson – Supporter Services Officer

Apologies:

Daren Cowley – Southam Supporters Club
Laura Smith – Family Zone
Steve Maloney – South Wales Supporters Club
Claudio Cardinello - Leamington and Warwick Supporters

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

- Season Ticket holders discount for Club Merchandise – confirmed there would not be one. There will be a discount in 25/26 for Season Ticket holders purchasing matchday hospitality.
- Cycling provision on matchday – MH confirmed the cleanliness of existing facilities has been raised with the Arena as a first step. CH pointed out that additional signage would be useful.
- Season Ticket holder discount for away travel – no update

3. Equality and Diversity (EFL Mandate) – CCFC

An update from Eamon Collins, the Club's Disability Access Officer, was shared. This is attached to these minutes – Appendix 1.

MH updated meeting on the Club's wider EDI work. The Club is scheduling to support various campaigns through the season, including around disability, LGBTQ+ and women. Details of these would be shared through the season with fans ahead of those matches.

The Club continues its work around the EFL's EDI Code of Practice, having previously achieved Bronze status when this was introduced. There are various requirements and standards, and this work is ongoing.

The Internal EDI Group meets regularly to discuss the work the Club is doing and any ideas for improvements. This brings together areas across the Football Club, sharing good practice.

4. Club update - Doug King

DK spoke to introduce NI and PT to the meeting. Both started their respective roles this week. DK spoke about the experience and qualities that they will bring to the Club, ensuring that the Club has an Executive Team in place to drive it forward off the field.

NI will be focused on commercial revenues and PT operations, ensuring costs at the Club are controlled. The Football Club continues to lose £6-£7m annually, which is covered by the Owner.

The Club wants to grow its commercial revenues. The sponsorship with Monzo has been really successful for both parties, and the Club wants to increase its range of partners further.

DK spoke about the additions of Miguel Ángel Brau and Kaine Kesler-Hayden to the squad. Both will add further quality to the squad. DK updated the meeting on the arrival of Carl Rushworth, whose loan was announced while the meeting was being held. He arrives from Brighton, and will be important for the Club while Oliver Dovin is out injured.

DK was at Bristol Rovers for the friendly last night and was impressed and also attended the pre-season tour in Portugal. The team has worked really hard during pre-season and is focused on the start of the new campaign.

RD updated the group on kit, the home kit going on sale on Friday morning. RD briefly explained the process involved in the kit, having first started 18 months ago. CH asked about availability of certain sizes, following website article that afternoon. RD explained all stock will be available in matter of days, the majority being available on the 'on sale' date, and that such an extensive update on stock was provided to be open with fans rather than having fans turn up and not be able to buy certain ranges on the day. DK explained some delays due to internal sign off from him, which will be smoother with NI added to the team now. RD added thanks to the fans for buying items and engaging with the products. RD revealed more retro items will be available next season too.

5. Responses to submitted questions – CCFC

Answers to pre-submitted questions, and additional questions, are shared in Appendix 2.

DK provided updates on 5 and 10.

5 – the Club has a positive relationship with the Arena and Frasers Group. The Club is improving their asset through its actions and considerable investment made by the Club, such as CCFC paying for the replacement this summer of turnstiles and floodlights. Frasers Group see the benefit of the Club and its fans.

The Club and Frasers Group talk regularly, and DK aware of the timelines of the current lease agreement and also the fine from the EFL (£10k) if a Club does not have a 10-year agreement in place by end of August.

PG & CH asked questions regarding the Arena agreement. DK said he sees the best model for any Club to own their stadium and has previously been on record saying this. That would be his preference, but it is not solely up to him as there would need to be a willing seller too.

10 – CH mentioned other Clubs with all Academy and First-Team on one site. DK said that he likes the Alan Higgs Centre, and doesn't feel the need to have both the Academy and First-Team on one site. The Alan Higgs Centre feels gritty, urban and is at the heart of the community, which is important for access for young players. It is not a 'spa' environment, and grounds players and helps them to work hard. It is frustrating that some players are 'stolen' from the Academy by other Clubs, but this happens to all. The Academy has a good set up. Having focused on First-Team and Arena, and following the appointments of NI and PT, DK plans to spend more time on supporting the Academy.

SS spoke about her son, having been to a number of Academies, preferring Coventry City. Staff are welcoming, know each player's names, and there is a good environment. Players feel like they have a clear pathway through the Academy and the chance to be successful.

BB asked further questions on Q1 r.e. player interaction, seeing opportunity for signatures etc as players arrive as important. DK said he understands point of view and that the involvement of fans is vital. However, focus on matchday was something that was integral to Frank Lampard, which is why players no longer stop on their way into games for photos and signatures. The Head Coach sees matchday focus on football as so important that for early home kick-offs the team now stays at a hotel together the night before a game to ensure this. DK confirmed that 2 players will visit lounges post-match (Balcony Street Bar and Club Coventry).

JS asked further regarding Q4. Supporter Groups. NI said that this had been one of the areas she had been heavily involved in during her first few days at the Club and, following discussions internally that day, the Club planned to communicate in the coming days.

PG reinforced that the overall matchday experience had improved hugely. PG asked about food options at the Arena. MH said that he and LT had a good meeting with Arena's Head of Concessions and Club will share news of new food options from the Arena ahead of the season.

Question asked supplementary to Q3 by CH, regarding shuttle bus. MH confirmed it will be in place for new season, with a £5 return cost – this being subsidised by the Club. CH asked how this would operate, MH said that the shuttle bus for 25/26 will be publicly confirmed ahead of new season (it is not operating for pre-season games) including info on how fans can use/pay.

Question asked about train provision on matchdays. PT spoke about previous experience at other Clubs. Group spoke about previous challenges on matchdays, reasons given, and hope that improvements could be pushed for to help train provision to the Arena.

PT said if there are any topics in particular the Group want raised with the SAG, to speak to him and MH and they can help support this.

PG spoke on Q1, regarding remembrance bricks. Praising the Memorial Matchdays organised by the Club, PG suggested working group to be formed to look at ways that fans who have passed away could be remembered in a more permanent way.

Asked about turnstiles and digital ticketing, DK confirmed digital Season Tickets will not be in place for this season but that the Club hopes to give fans that option in the future.

6. Family Zone update

MH provided an update on Family Zone. The Matchday Activity Area will be back and there are new activities planned for next season in the Zone, the Club having achieved Gold Status in the EFL's Family Excellence scheme.

MH, LT and Dave Busst (Sky Blues in the Community) have had positive meetings during the summer with the Family Zone volunteers – supporting the relationship, helping everyone work closer together and ensuring DBS checks in place.

There will be a number of improvements to the Family Zone signage and branding, helping to make it a more welcoming environment for young fans.

BB suggested Academy players could visit the FZ, this having been done previously, which will be explored by the Club further.

7. Any Other Business

BB suggested Jack Rudoni could be presented with the Player of the Year award ahead of pre-season fixture.

AL raised the application to stop drop offs on Judds Lane on matchdays. MH said Club aware of it and aware how it could affect matchdays for some supporters. Club will update fans ahead of the new season of how this could affect them. DK suggested that with higher attendances, safety authorities (outside of the Club's control) are on the side of caution.

BB and AL raised about prospect of museum at the Arena, and the importance of celebrating the history of the Club. DK said that it would be great to showcase the Club's history in a dedicated space, and being able to display trophies for fans to view too, however not owning the Arena makes this challenging.

8. Date of next meeting

To be agreed once fixture changes have been finalised.

Appendix 1 – Disability Access Officer Update – Eamon Collins

Apologies for absence. I have prepared a few updates around key projects and ongoing areas of discussion for accessibility within the stadium, and the overall match day experience.

Subway Access

Access via Tesco Car Park and Car Park C.

This has been an issue which has been highlighted last season whereby these areas have become flooded on a number of occasions. These areas need improvements to lighting and surfacing for all supporters, but particularly those with accessible needs. Meaningful conversation has been had through the Arena with the Council and Network Rail about improving these areas. Both CCFC and The Arena are closely allied as we push for sufficient change and improvements in these areas.

Mobility Aid Parking Zones

A trial took place last season on the North and East Concourse to create Mobility Aid Parking areas for those supporters who need to attend the Arena in their mobility scooter, but who then transfer to a GA seat. These areas were determined next to the accessible toilets in the concourse. Following the success of the trial, these will be made permanent with markings on the floor and suitable signage in place.

Accessible Toilets Painting

Accessible toilets will be painted and improved in the lead up to the start of the season.

Sensory Packs

Working closely with Ras, we will be putting together Sensory Packs which will provide key elements such as ear defenders and stress and fidget toys for those with sensory needs. This will put us in line with many PL and EFL Clubs as we continue our drive for Inclusivity here at The Arena.

Sensory Room Upgrade

During the course of the 2024/25 season the location of the room was changed, moving it from the South West corner next to the Visiting Supporters, into a room on Level 2 at the North End of the Arena.

This was a great improvement as it afforded external seating outside for integration into the match day experience, whilst providing the calm space inside if required. Excellent feedback was received as a result of this change. The equipment has been in use for two seasons and as a result of this, has become tired and in need of improving. I am working closely with some leading UK suppliers around what could be suitable for the space, considering the limitations of this room having to remain as a Hotel room outside of match days.

Audio Descriptive Commentary Review

After a successful meeting and review, the ADC service will continue through the 2025/26 season providing a valuable and greatly appreciated service for blind or visually impaired supporters of both Home and Away teams. Working along side Alan March Sports, we will be starting our service from the pre-season friendlies and for every match this season. CCFC will be responsible for handing out and collecting the receivers, providing a more bespoke service whilst in the process increasing supporter engagement.

Table Signage in Hospitality Areas

We have sourced and will be providing improved signage for tables in Hospitality Areas. “Reserved for Supporters with Accessible needs” signs will be located on key tables in these areas ensuring those who need them will be able to utilise them.

Steward Training

A steward training meeting was held on 15 July in which I was able to present a detailed plan around disability and supporters with accessible needs. Stewards were provided with a comprehensive training book to help them understand disabilities and how to conduct their role when dealing with disabled fans. I have a strong relationship with stewards in key areas such as accessible platforms and access gates, which has been strengthened as a result of this training. A very productive session, which was very well received.

Visitors Accessible Platform

Work towards a suitable long term option is still underway as we look to provide 8 WC spaces for visiting supporters. A suitable temporary solution will be in place until this has been finalised similar to the platform provided last season.

As always, I am available for any enquiries if any of your members need assistance or guidance with matters of Accessibility. Please feel free to circulate accessibility@CCFC.co.uk for any enquiries.